

LAW ENFORCEMENT  
**TORCH RUN**<sup>®</sup>  
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

## REGION 13



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It is with a sense of personal and organizational pride that I am officially informing you that at the recently concluded International Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics Conference held in the Bahamas from October 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> I was elected to serve in the post of Regional Director for Region 13 and a member of the LETR International Council. This was a truly historic occasion because it was the first time since the inception of the programme, which started in the United States in 1981 and was first introduced to the Caribbean by now retired Jamaica Constabulary Force Assistant Commissioner of Police Neville Wheatle, that it was being held outside of the United States and it was the first time in its history that a Regional Director was being appointed from the Caribbean Region to serve in this capacity. One of the reasons for hosting the conference in the Caribbean is to motivate and inspire Commissioners of Police and members of the various law enforcement agencies to become more engaged in the Law Enforcement Torch Run programme, which is geared towards raising funds and creating awareness about the work of Special Olympics. It also caters to the physical, health, educational, social and sporting needs of persons in the region and globally with intellectual disabilities. If properly applied it can be a useful tool to expand community based policing, engage local partners and improve police/citizen relationship.

Region 13 comprises twenty seven (27) countries, zoned as follows:-

- Zone 1 – Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman, Jamaica, Turks & Caicos
- Zone 2 – French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Martinique, Saint Martin
- Zone 3 - Dominica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Island
- Zone 4 - Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
- Zone 5 - Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Maarten, Suriname

## **BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics is the movement's largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle. At the most basic level, Torch Run is an actual running event, in which police officers and athletes run with the Flame of Hope™ to the Opening Ceremonies of local Special Olympics competitions and State and National Games to raise funds globally. Annually, more than 85,000 dedicated, compassionate, volunteer law enforcement officers participate in the torch run throughout 35 nations, 12 Canadian provinces and 50 US states, raising more than \$50 Million USD for local Special Olympics programs worldwide in 2015 with over half a Billion raised since its inception in 1981.

The man behind the first Torch Run in 1981 was Wichita, Kansas Police Chief Richard LaMunyon. He conceived the Torch Run as a way to involve local law enforcement personnel in the community and to support Special Olympics. The Torch Run was quickly adopted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) now recognized as the founding law enforcement organization for the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics. Today, the Torch Run is more than just a run and encompasses a variety of fundraising vehicles such as T-shirt and merchandise sales, special events to include polar bear plunges, tip-a-cop and 5 & 10K Runs and a host of other events that have local, state and national appeal. The Law Enforcement Torch Run transforms communities by inspiring people to open their minds, to accept and include people with intellectual disabilities, celebrating differences among all people ... recognizing and respecting the similarities we all share. For athletes and officers alike, the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics is a story of success, love, respect and commitment between law enforcement officers and Special Olympics athletes.

## **ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

The Regional Coordinator is the Liaison between the Law Enforcement International Council and the countries within the Regional. The person has a responsibility to ensure that the LETR movement in the Region is active and vibrant and is expected to engage and encourage all countries in the region to become involved in the LETR

movement. The coordinator is to ensure that where there is no active programme it is introduced to the Commissioner of Police for that country with a view getting him to embrace, buy into the concept and get the members of the force to become actively involved and get started. The coordinator will keep abreast of activities within the movement and keep the members informed on a timely basis. The coordinator will also support the groups in getting started and work to strengthen existing programmes where the needs exist. The coordinator will also ensure that each programme submits timely reports on programmes and activities to the Regional and International Councils and to ensure that there is a good system in place for ongoing communication within the group.

The coordinator will conduct needs assessment and work in collaboration with LETR International to organize training and conduct workshops based on the gaps identified. In order to maintain the cohesiveness within the region and to provide a platform to share thoughts and best practices as well as to develop plan of action and strategies to be adopted for the sustainability of the movement, Zonal and Regional Conferences will be held annually.

Another mandate of the Regional Coordinator is to ensure that there is ongoing cohesiveness and partnership between the local LETR and Special Olympics programmes.

## **DIRECTOR'S VISION**

The vision is to work in collaboration with each of the countries within Region 13 to improve, expand and promote the Law Enforcement Torch for Special Olympics Movement as a vehicle for raising funds for, and creating awareness about, persons with intellectual disabilities and to support the work of Community Based Policing in the Region.

## **MISSION**

### **For the next two years we intend to:-**

- Engage/sensitize all Police Commissioners in the region to share the concept and to get their commitment to implement the programme. Existing communication platforms will be utilized
- Significantly increase the participation of Police Departments in the Region in 2016 -2017
- Select a vibrant and competent police leader for each of the five (5) Zones
- Increase the amount of money raised to support Special Olympics Regionally
- Hold our inaugural LETR Regional Conference in 2016
- Resume the once successful LETR Regional Run in 2017 leading up to the World Games

Useful links: <http://www.lettr.org/>

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